

***Poa nervosa* (Hook.) Vasey**
Wheeler's bluegrass
Poaceae (Grass Family)

Status: State Sensitive
Rank: G3?S2

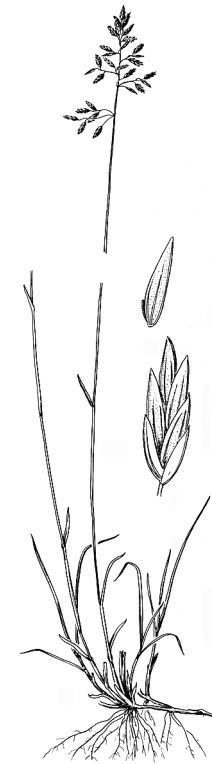
General Description: Adapted from Cronquist et al. (1977): Rhizomatous perennials, often producing large tufts, usually with numerous basal leaves. Culms erect, 12 to 24 inches tall, usually with 3 leaves. Sheaths glabrous or those of the basal leaves with retrorsely pubescent hairs, closed to above the middle, commonly reddish-purple below, the culm sheaths glabrous or merely scabrous. Ligules of the basal leaves very short, truncate, mostly less than 1/16 inch, those of the culm leaves longer, about 1/16 inch long, acute to obtusish, the thickened ligules of the basal and culm leaves very distinctive. Blades <1/16 to 1/8 inch broad, flat to folded, somewhat scabrous above, the tip strongly boat-shaped, those of the innovations smaller and narrower. Panicles 1 2/3 to 4 inches long, usually open and pyramidal with a nodding apex but sometimes narrow, with 3 or 4 branches below, the branches filiform and often flexuous, ascending or spreading. Spikelets 1/4 to 1/2 inch long, ovate, strongly compressed, relatively large, loosely flowered and exposing the rachilla and reduced terminal floret, 3 to 5 flowered. Florets in our plants seemingly always pistillate. Glumes broad with narrow hyaline margins, the first glume 1/10 to 1/8 inch long, 1- to 3-nerved, lanceolate, the second 1/8 to 1/4 inch long, 3-nerved, oblong-oblancoate. Lemmas 1/8 to 1/4 inch long, mostly strongly nerved, glabrous or pubescent on the lower part of the lemma, not webbed at the base, with scarious margins and apex often purplish in the middle. Lodicules <1/16 inch long.

Identification Tips: This species can be recognized by its rhizomatous habit, retrorsely puberulent and purplish sheaths, and pistillate flowers. The ligule is very distinctive in that it is peculiarly thickened, strongly pubescent and ciliate, and usually truncate (Hitchcock et al. 1969).

Phenology: Identifiable April through August.

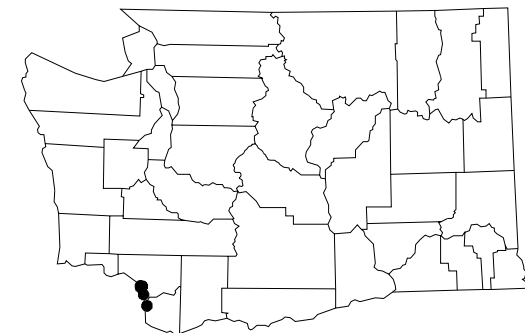
Range: Regional endemic; known from Vancouver Island southward to northwest Oregon. In Washington, the taxon is known from Clark and Cowlitz counties in the Puget Trough physiographic province.

Poa nervosa
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Known distribution of
Poa nervosa
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

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Habitat: In Washington, the species occurs on rock outcrops, cliff crevices, and occasionally in talus near the base of cliffs or outcrops. It occurs on sparsely and well vegetated outcrops, although it is more abundant in sparsely vegetated sites. These sites occur as openings in adjacent woods that are dominated by *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Acer macrophyllum* and *Quercus garryana*. Elevation ranges from 40 to 100 feet.

Ecology: *Poa nervosa* occurs in sites with little soil development and where the canopy cover is minimal. The sites are probably quite moist during the fall and winter, but dry out fairly quickly in spring and early summer.

State Status Comments: There are very few known occurrences in the state.

Inventory Needs: Additional inventory is needed at low elevations on the west side of the Cascades.

Threats and Management Concerns: Road maintenance and construction, herbicides, and quarrying are the main threats to the known occurrences.

References:

Cronquist et al. 1977. *Intermountain Flora: Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A. Volume 6: The Monocotyledons*. The New York Botanical Garden, New York.

Hitchcock, C. L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1969. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 1: Vascular Cryptogams, Gymnosperms, and Monocotyledons*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 914 pp.